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STATINTL

Proposed Treaty

Ohio's peppery Steve Young, at 76, surely one of the nation's oldest junior senators, continues to battle the militant right with an energy common to younger men. Current issue in the ideological joust is the proposed U.S.-Russian treaty for the exchange of consulates.

In announcing for the treaty, Sen. Young reported he has received a "tremendous volume of pressure mail" from Ohioans objecting to the treaty. "These citizens have unfortunately been misinformed," he said. "Right-wing extremists have circulated pamphlets distorting the facts."

Main popular objection has been the claim that the pact will foster Soviet espionage. With a candor rare when senators address the subject, Sen. Young went to the facts: "All of our embassies overseas have CIA operatives, or spies, who are on the embassy staffs. . . . I've personally talked with some of our CIA operatives in our embassies in foreign countries and know the facts. . . . The danger of a few more Russian agents posing as diplomats is infinitesimal compared to the benefits."

The senator, of course, is right. The treaty would provide legal protection for U. S. citizens in Russia, where some 12,000 traveled last year. It would drive a slim wedge into Russia's closed society. It would advance trade between the nations. It would help, in a small way, to ease international tensions.

The treaty has been hanging fire for more than a year. Its ratification now would stand as evidence of U. S. willingness for coexistence despite the policy collision created by the Vietnam war.